

Resolution of the Mayor and City Council Reaffirming the City's Commitment to Diversity, Inclusion, Freedom and Justice and Denouncing Anti-Immigrant Speech, Hate Crimes and Harassment

Gaithersburg, Md. (August 22, 2018) At their meeting on August 20, 2018, the Mayor and City Council of Gaithersburg adopted the following resolution reaffirming the City's commitment to diversity, inclusion, freedom and justice, and denouncing anti-immigrant speech, hate crimes and harassment.

WHEREAS, the City of Gaithersburg adopted Resolution R-45-17 on August 21, 2017, affirming the City's Commitment to Diversity, Inclusion, Freedom and Justice; and

WHEREAS, recent events, both nationally and locally, have demonstrated an increase in divisiveness and actions targeting minority and vulnerable populations and communities; and

WHEREAS, the City of Gaithersburg welcomes all people and recognizes the rights of individuals to live their lives with dignity, free from discrimination based on their faith, race, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender preference, disability or immigration status; and

WHEREAS, the City of Gaithersburg prides itself on its diversity and inclusiveness and recognizes the importance of the contributions of our diverse population on our social, religious, cultural, and economic lives; and

WHEREAS, the City of Gaithersburg believes in, lives by and stands for values of inclusion, equity, fairness and justice, and we unequivocally condemn Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, racism, sexism, xenophobia and bigotry of any kind in rhetoric or in action; and

WHEREAS, the City of Gaithersburg continues to work to ensure our services and programs are accessible and open to all individuals, groups and organizations and to build on the atmosphere of trust among City officials and employees and the community that makes Gaithersburg a thriving, welcoming community; and

WHEREAS, while speech is protected under the First Amendment of the Constitution, the City of Gaithersburg will condemn words, actions, literature or gatherings that promote hate, bigotry and distrust, that diminish individuals or groups or faiths, or that are intended to discriminate, intimidate or threaten the peace, welfare and security of our residents and undermine the quality of life in our city; and

WHEREAS, while the City of Gaithersburg has no authority to limit the activities of Federal, State, or County officers with respect to immigration enforcement within the City's borders, the City supports policies and practices that enhance the safety and security of our residents and neighborhoods, including Gaithersburg Police Department General Order 628.1 that directs that Gaithersburg Police Officers will not investigate or make an inquiry relative to the immigration status of individuals, and will not notify U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) regarding the immigration status of an individual, and, as such, all residents should feel free to contact the Gaithersburg Police Department on any matters of concern; and

WHEREAS, the City of Gaithersburg wishes to reaffirm its commitment to diversity, inclusion, freedom and justice as stated in Resolution R-45-17, state its commitment to community safety and trust, and denounce anti-immigrant speech, hate crimes and harassment.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Mayor and City Council of Gaithersburg, Maryland, in public meeting assembled, that the City hereby reaffirms its commitment to the values of equity, fairness, inclusion, trust and justice, and further states:

That the City of Gaithersburg will continue to provide its services and opportunities to all people, regardless of their faith, race, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender preference, disability or immigration status and will continue to be an inclusive community where all people are treated with respect.

That unless required by Federal, State, or local law or judicial decision, no City official or employee will request, investigate or assist in the investigation of the citizenship or immigration status of any person.

That unless required by Federal, State or local law or judicial decision, no member of the Gaithersburg Police Department is authorized to enforce Federal immigration laws or inquire about immigration or citizenship status or place of birth of an arrestee or victim of a crime.

That no City official or employee acting in their official capacity with the City, may coerce a person based upon their actual or perceived citizenship or immigration status or communicate a threat to deport a person under circumstances that reasonably tend to intimidate or produce a fear that the threat will be carried out.

That the City of Gaithersburg will continue to reject bigotry, misogyny, homophobia, racism, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, and xenophobia in any form.

That the City of Gaithersburg will continue to denounce hate speech, hate crimes and harassment and will use all means within its authority to respond to and address this conduct.

ADOPTED BY THE City Council this 20th day of August, 2018.